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Rundle Studio was piloted during COVID and will be launching in September 2021.  Rundle College Society // Submitted

## EDUCATION



# This new online school is tailored for students with ADHD

BY KRISTY ARCHIBALD

***Rundle Studio can reach students with learning disabilities across Alberta and provide them with individualized tools and resources to thrive past their post-secondary education.***

Rundle College, a well-known Calgary private school, was founded in 1985 by Dr. Jack Collett and Dr. Rodney Conklin. Soon after they realized that some of their students were falling through the cracks, which eventually lead to Rundle Academy

in 1992, a school solely focused on educating students with learning disabilities. Now, in 2021 they aim to add a new (virtual) campus to the roster, [Rundle Studio](#).

Rundle Studio, is an Alberta-Education approved online education school with a similar DNA and focus as Rundle Academy. The school was imagined over two years ago, but piloted during COVID.

John Wolf, has been a teacher with Rundle for 13 years and is now the Principle of Rundle Studio. He tells Calgary Citizen that 15% of all students have learning disabilities and merely 10% of those students go on to a post-secondary institution of their choice.

"Now if you apply this to Alberta, knowing how many kids have a learning disability and only 10% of them go on — we just think that we can do better." He adds that at Rundle Academy 95% of their students go on to a post-secondary program or school of their choosing.

"There's definitely something we're doing that is correct, that's working, and successful. And that's where we wanted to decrease those limitations with Rundle Studio by opening our program up for all students across Alberta."

### **Who can be a student at Rundle Studio?**

This new virtual school is targeted at those students who have mild to moderate ADHD, a diagnosed learning disability, or autism spectrum disorder.

"All students begin with a psycho-educational assessment and we look at the discrepancies between their ability and their achievement level," says Wolf adding that when we know their ability we just have to find a way for them to be able to bring that and meet their potential.

### **How so?**

All lessons are a maximum of 10 to 15 minutes and are all recorded.

"This will really help those students with ADD or ADHD who have slower processing can rewatch and review the material as many times as they need," says

Wolf, adding that they also give students specific strategies that help them with task initiation, organization, emotional regulation, social regulation, time management and more.

"For example, if you got a student with ADHD to write an essay they are going to need things separated into smaller steps so that they can regulate and manage one step at a time, instead of 15 — simply reducing the amount of steps and the amount at one time is huge."

Rundle Studio will also use various approaches that include Individual Program Plans (IPP), Universal Design for Learning (UDL) to provide students with a buffet of tools and resources that makes everything accessible.

"We just want to be inclusive and want to give equity to students and be able to meet them where they're at — there is no one-size-fits-all approach."

### **What about socialization?**

This is a question that they get asked a lot. Wolf tells us they have put a lot of work into providing students at Rundle Studio with options for both in-person and virtual socialization opportunities.

This includes monthly meet-ups, field trips, team challenges, and of course fostering online socialization through group work, collaboration, and virtual recess.

And of course, post-covid reinstating their legendary 'Friday Night Lights,' a football tailgate at Rundle College that kids from all Rundle schools will be invited to attend and participate in.

Rundle Studio will begin its first semester in September 2021 for grades seven and eight with 14 students per class — so they can focus their personalized approach over this new learning medium. As a private school, there is a cost involved, but Wolf tells us that the admission is less than half of what it would be for in-person learning.